

ISRAELI PAPER SAYS MIDEAST INITIATIVE HAS PASSED TO MOSCOW

TA211154 TEL AVIV MA'ARIV IN HEBREW 21 APR 75 P 5 TA

(EDITORIAL: "THE INITIATIVE HAS PASSED TO MOSCOW")

(TEXT) THE INITIATIVE IN FINDING A SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST HAS PASSED FROM THE AMERICANS TO THE RUSSIANS. AT A TIME WHEN WASHINGTON IS INVOLVED IN A PERIOD OF A TOTALLY PASSIVE "REASSESSMENT" OF ITS POLICY TOWARD OUR REGION, MOSCOW IS DISPLAYING UNCEASING ACTIVITY.

IT IS NOW THE CENTER TO WHICH PILGRIMAGES ARE MADE; IT IS THE ONE WHICH DETERMINES THE DATE AND THE CONDITIONS OF THE CONVOCAATION OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE; IT IS THE ONE WHICH DECIDES WHO WILL BE INVITED TO THE CONFERENCE AND WHO WILL NOT. ACCORDING TO ALL SIGNS, THE SOVIET UNION DOES NOT WANT A HASTY CONFERENCE WHICH WILL END IN FAILURE; IT SEES THE NEED TO PREPARE ALL MOVES CAREFULLY TO INSURE RESULTS WHERE THE U.S. EFFORTS HAVE PRODUCED A DEADLOCK. THIS IS THE BIG CHANCE WHICH THE SOVIET POLICY MAKERS HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR, AND THEY DO NOT WANT TO WASTE IT.

THEY, OF COURSE, KNOW THAT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE MAKES NO SENSE WITHOUT AN ISRAELI READINESS TO TAKE PART AND COOPERATE IN IT. IT IS NOT A COINCIDENCE THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS NOW STRESSING ITS SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE, AND THE NEED TO INSURE A PLACE FOR ISRAEL AMONG THE NATIONS OF THE REGION. IT IS EXPECTED THAT THERE WILL BE FURTHER SOVIET FEELERS REGARDING ISRAEL'S INTENTIONS AND SOME FORM OF ISRAELI-SOVIET DIALOG. WITHOUT THIS THERE IS NOT MUCH PROSPECT FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE SOVIET EFFORT TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A SETTLEMENT.

THE PRINCIPAL OBSTACLE--AND THE SOVIETS ARE NOT IGNORING IT--IS EGYPT'S DEMAND TO INCLUDE A PLO DELEGATION IN THE CONFERENCE. AS LONG AS ISRAEL'S DECISION NOT TO NEGOTIATE WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION OF THE TERRORISTS STANDS, ALL THAT IS NEEDED TO TORPEDO THE CONFERENCE IN ADVANCE IS TO GRANT STATUS TO THE PLO.

IT IS ASSUMED, THEREFORE, THAT THE SOVIETS WILL CONCENTRATE THEIR EFFORTS IN THE FUTURE ON FINDING A FORMULA THAT WILL SATISFY BOTH THE ARAB STATES AND ISRAEL ON THIS FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE. IF

THE SOVIET UNION IS NOT PRESSING FOR A QUICK CONVOCAATION OF THE CONFERENCE AND IF THE DATE BEING MENTIONED NOW IS IN ANOTHER TWO

MONTHS, THE REASON IS THAT TIME IS REQUIRED TO SOLVE THIS COMPLEX PROBLEM.

AT A TIME WHEN MOSCOW IS BECOMING THE FOCUS OF MIDDLE EAST ACTIVITY, ISRAELI EFFORTS ARE STILL BEING DIRECTED TOWARD WASHINGTON BECAUSE OF INERTIA AND PERHAPS ALSO BECAUSE OF HOPE THAT IT IS STILL POSSIBLE TO TURN THE CLOCK BACK.

HOWEVER, IT SEEMS THAT LISTENING TO THE VOICES COMING FROM MOSCOW IS MORE IMPORTANT NOW THAN ATTEMPTING TO REVIVE THE U.S. INITIATIVE, WHOSE CHANCES OF SUCCESS ARE VERY SMALL.

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